

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USBERLIN 0493

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, BQG
SUBJECT: FURTHER PRESS COMMENT ON NATIONALSTIFTUNG

REF: BONN 03429

1. REFTEL ARTICLE DOES INDEED HAVE QUALITIES OF COMMON-
SENSE AND RATIONALITY WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN TOO NOTICEABLE
IN MUCH OF DISCUSSION OVER RECENT YEARS OF VEXED SUBJECT
OF NATIONALSTIFTUNG. I DO HAVE TWO INCIDENTAL COMMENTS:
ONE IS THAT AS SEEN FROM HERE, AUTHOR TENDS TO UNDER-
ESTIMATE THE POLITICAL-EMOTIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE
"BERLIN CONNECTION" TO WHOLE CONCEPT. WHATEVER THE
CONCEPT IS OR MAY BECOME, THE APPARENTLY SENSIBLE STEP
OF PUTTING ITS IMPLEMENTING APPARATUS IN BONN BECAUSE
BONN IS THE FRG CAPTIAL MAY BE UNACHIEVABLE. EVEN
GOVERNING MAYOR STOBBE, AN EMINENTLY SENSIBLE
POLITICIAN WHO IS NO DRUMBEATER FOR PUTTING NEW THINGS
IN BERLIN WHICH WOULD ANNOY THE SOVIETS, AND WHO
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MAY WELL WISH WILLY BRANDT HAD NEVER STARTED THIS PAR-
TICULAR BALL ROLLING, HAS SAID THAT PRESSURES AGAINST
ACTUALIZING IDEA IN SOME MANNER OUTSIDE BERLIN ARE
EXTREMELY STRONG, AND BINDING ON HIM.

2. THE OTHER COMMENT IS THAT FINAL PARAGRAPH OF ARTICLE
STRIKES ME AS OVERLY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT BERLIN'S FUTURE

AS A CENTER OF RECONCILIATION BETWEEN EAST AND WEST. THE TERM "OUTPOST CITADEL" PROBABLY STRIKES AUTHOR AS HAVING TOO MUCH OF A COLD WAR RING, BUT FACT IS THAT WEST BERLIN IS A DE FACTO PIECE OF THE WEST, LOCATED IN THE EAST, WHICH MAKES IT A SORT OF OUTPOST OR ISLAND, WHATEVER THE TERMINOLOGY USED. THIS MEANS THAT IT REMAINS UNDER PRESSURES THAT VARY IN KIND AND INTENSITY BUT DO NOT GO AWAY OR BASICALLY CHANGE. THE QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT DID NOT ALTER THIS SITUATION IN ANY SERIOUS WAY, AND WHILE THE SOVIETS AND GDR MAY TALK FROM TIME TO TIME ABOUT MAKING BERLIN A CENTER OF EAST-WEST RECONCILIATION, THIS HAS ALWAYS IMPLIED AN AGREEMENT TO UNACCEPTABLE EASTERN TERMS. AS JOACHIM NAWROCKI, AN ASTUTE AND WELL-INFORMED OBSERVER, WRITES IN DIE ZEIT OF MARCH 3, THE RECENT EXCHANGE OF VIEWS BETWEEN GOVERNING MAYOR STOBBE AND AMBASSADOR ABRASIMOV, HOWEVER POLITE IT MAY HAVE BEEN, WILL PROBABLY HAVE SERVED ONLY TO MAKE CLEAR THAT THEIR VIEWS ARE IRRECONCILABLE--STOBBE IS NO MORE PREPARED TO MAKE CONCESSIONS THAN WAS HIS PREDECESSOR, AND BERLIN REMAINS A BONE OF CONTENTION (ZANKPFEL).
GEORGE

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